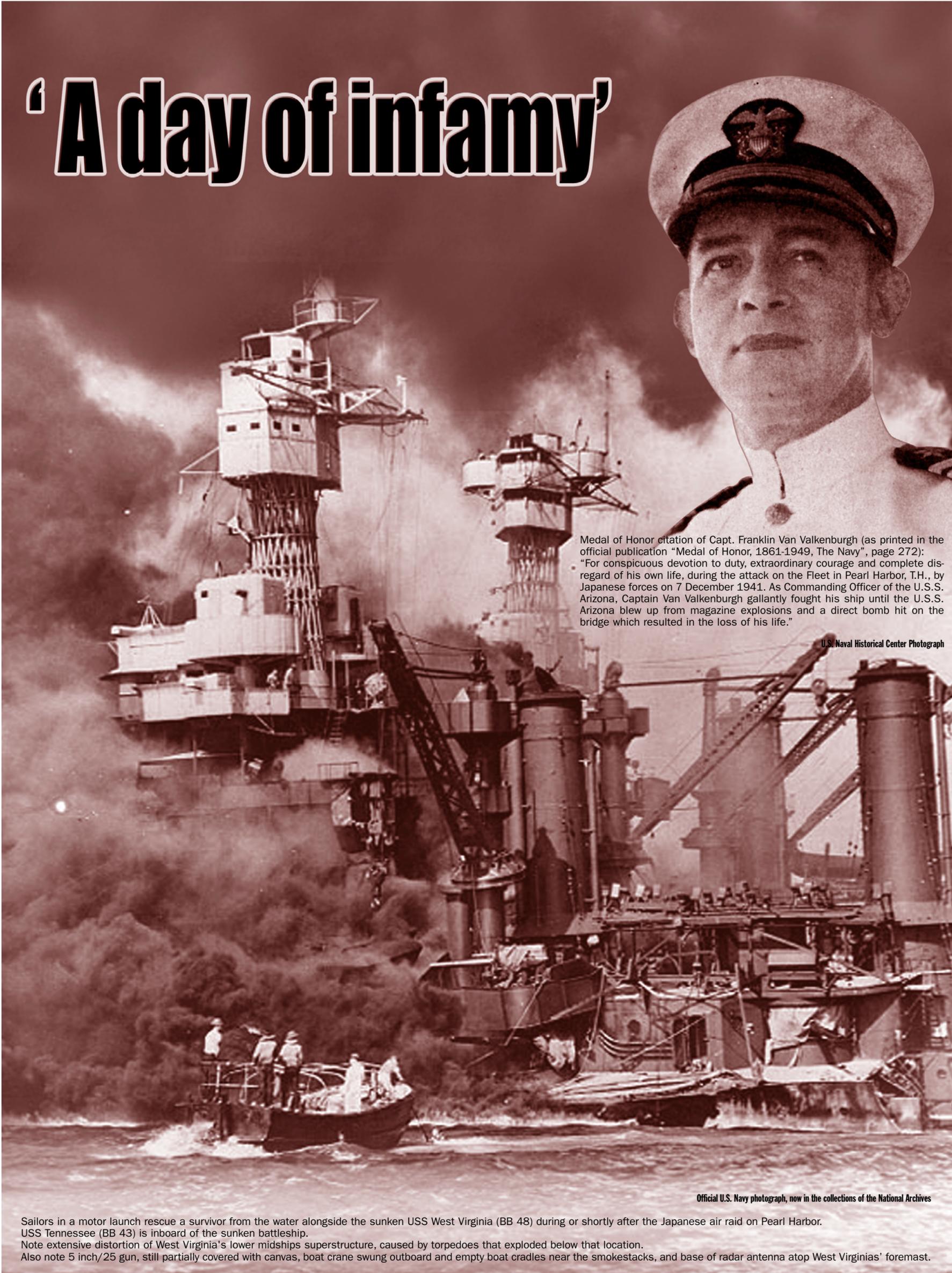


'A day of infamy'



Medal of Honor citation of Capt. Franklin Van Valkenburgh (as printed in the official publication "Medal of Honor, 1861-1949, The Navy", page 272): "For conspicuous devotion to duty, extraordinary courage and complete disregard of his own life, during the attack on the Fleet in Pearl Harbor, T.H., by Japanese forces on 7 December 1941. As Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. Arizona, Captain Van Valkenburgh gallantly fought his ship until the U.S.S. Arizona blew up from magazine explosions and a direct bomb hit on the bridge which resulted in the loss of his life."

U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph



Official U.S. Navy photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives

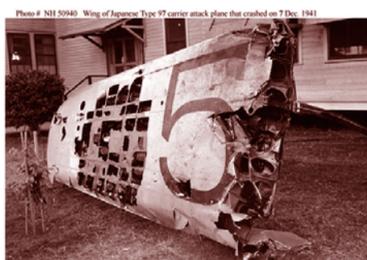
Sailors in a motor launch rescue a survivor from the water alongside the sunken USS West Virginia (BB 48) during or shortly after the Japanese air raid on Pearl Harbor. USS Tennessee (BB 43) is inboard of the sunken battleship. Note extensive distortion of West Virginia's lower midships superstructure, caused by torpedoes that exploded below that location. Also note 5 inch/25 gun, still partially covered with canvas, boat crane swung outboard and empty boat cradles near the smokestacks, and base of radar antenna atop West Virginias' foremast.



Official U.S. Navy photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives
Fighting fires on the sunken battleship West Virginia (BB-48), Dec. 7, 1941.



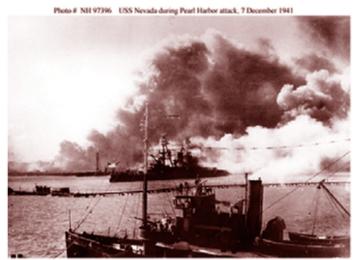
Official U.S. Navy photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives
USS Arizona (BB-39) ablaze, just after her forward magazines exploded.



U.S. Naval Historical Center photograph
Wing of a Japanese Navy Type 97 Carrier attack plane (Kate) that crashed at the Naval Hospital, Pearl Harbor, during the attack.



U.S. Naval Historical Center photograph
Vertical aerial view of "Battleship Row" beside Ford Island, during the early part of the horizontal bombing attack on the ships moored there.



Official U.S. Navy photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives
USS Nevada heading down channel after attack.

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... Halfway to the main hospital building, a tremendous explosion rocked the entire area. Looking back a towering pillar of smoke and fire covered the area and debris rained down over the medical compound. This was the classic "LIFE" magazine picture of the Destroyer "Shaw" blowing up.

Tully Talbot Blalock Sr, M.D. was a division medical officer at the U.S. Navy Naval Hospital. This account offers excerpts from Tully's story (circa 1985).

For the next hour, the attack continued. Japanese planes skimmed the hospital compound at tree-top level, launching their torpedoes and bombs at the ships in the harbor and at Ford Island across the channel. Suddenly one of the planes nosedived into the hospital tennis court, bounced up against the laboratory building and disintegrated into a ball of fire. One

nurse was assigned to each two wards with one Hospital Corpsman per ward. Within two hours there were 254 badly burned patients filling the beds, floor space, tables, and every conceivable space of wards "D" and "E." As the first patient was brought in covered with oil grime and severely burned, he was put on the examining table. Before he could be given a shot of morphine there were twenty more patients just like him on the floor outside. Most of the men were in shock, all were in great pain, a few already dead and more coming every minute. The personnel problem was solved by commandeering each stretcher bearer, putting him to work cutting off the clothing and fetching supplies. There were no IV fluids, no plasma, no blood, no laboratory work. As the clothing was removed it was evident that the burns were mainly on exposed areas, face, neck, arms and legs. Even a thin T shirt seemed to protect against the flash burns.

There were many deeper burns, shrapnel wounds and crush injuries. Many of the men had inhaled smoke, water and oil, and all were in acute respiratory distress. With all exposed areas burned, a major problem was finding an available vein for fluids when the supply arrived. With their clothing off the men began to freeze and the few blankets were soon exhausted. There was no heat in the building and no available heat cradles. Morphine was the only answer.

By 10 a.m. the attack was over, but the wounded poured in for another three or four hours, being brought in from the ships in the harbor and from Ford Island. By noon there were three doctors assigned to the two burn wards with one nurse, two corpsmen and an assortment of machinist's mates, bosuns and seamen. They were all superb. The dedication, willingness and gentleness of these untrained sailors was magnificent. They were real heroes.

... There were no antibiotics in 1941, nothing but morphine and sulfanilamide.

... Many of the boys died that first night.

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Official U.S. Navy photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives

USS Utah capsizing

Capsizing off Ford Island, during the attack on Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941, after being torpedoed by Japanese aircraft. Note colors half-raised over fantail, boats nearby, and sheds covering Utah's after guns. Photographed from USS Tangier (AV-8), which was moored astern of Utah.



Bomber burning at Kaneohe

PBY patrol bomber burning at Naval Air Station Kaneohe, Oahu, during the Japanese attack.

Official U.S. Navy photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives

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On Dec. 7th I awoke by lots of noise. I told Swede I was going to step out to see what all the noise was about. Just as I stepped on the float a Zero flew over, low, and I saw him drop his torpedo. We

Elmer Willis Smith was a chief motor machinist's mate in the U.S. Navy. He was at the neck of the harbor, overhauling boat engines on the North Hampton's boats.

hunkered down under a concrete platform until the attacks were over. Then we took the boat and went looking for survivors, and those who didn't survive. We came around the end of Ford Island and saw the USS Oklahoma upside down and smoking.

This was so hard to take as I was on that ship for three years and had many buddies still on her. As we went by her, we heard pounding on the hull, marked the location and went into dock to alert authorities that there were people still alive in that ship. In 2004 I went to a Pearl Harbor Survivor's lunch and met an Oklahoma survivor who had been pounding on that hull!

We went to see the latest Pearl Harbor story last year [reference to the movie "Pearl Harbor."]. It was good, but couldn't begin to give one the feel of the level of noise, the horrible stench of burning oil and flesh, the smoke so thick that it hid the sun and choked one with every breath. I never felt so proud of being an American as we watched each man, each survivor doing what needed to be done, doing their duty and the duty of those who were killed. I don't think the Japanese understood the nature of Americans nor what they took on.

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Official U.S. Navy photograph, from the collections of the Naval Historical Center

Damage at Wheeler Field

Men examine the burned-out wreckage of a P-40 pursuit aircraft, near hangar 4 at Wheeler Air Field, following the end of the Japanese raid on Dec. 7, 1941. Note long blast tubes for the plane's nose machine guns.



Official U.S. Navy photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives

View from submarine base

View looking toward the Navy Yard from the Submarine Base during the attack. Submarine in the left foreground is USS Narwhal (SS-167). In the distance are several cruisers, with large cranes and 1010 dock in the right center. Note the Sailors in the center foreground, wearing web pistol belts with their white uniforms.

Capt. Van Valkenburgh, CO of Arizona

Awarded the Medal of Honor, posthumously, for devotion to duty and courage while serving as commanding officer of USS Arizona (BB-39) during the Dec. 7, 1941 Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor.



Medal of Honor citation of Capt. Franklin Van Valkenburgh
"For conspicuous devotion to duty, extraordinary courage and complete disregard of his own life, during the attack on

the Fleet in Pearl Harbor, T.H., by Japanese forces on 7 December 1941. As Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. Arizona, Captain Van Valkenburgh gallantly fought his ship until the U.S.S. Arizona blew up from magazine explosions and a direct bomb hit on the bridge which resulted in the loss of his life."

U.S. Naval Historical Center photograph



My boat crew and myself had gotten up early Sunday to varnish our motor launch. As the boat was on the boat deck, my Bow Hook yelled that a plane had dropped a bomb on Ford Island. As I looked up a second plane dropped another bomb and the hanger blew up. Then a torpedo plane came low out of Pearl City, let loose a torpedo hitting the Utah. I saw the bomb drop on the Arizona.

Wilbur H. Mikkelsen was assigned to the USS Whitney at the time of the attack. He served in the Navy from 1939 and retired in 1959.

By this time I had my crew in #6 motor launch heading for Marys Point Landing to pick up a load of sailors to bring back to the Vestal, Dobbin, Whitney and Detroit. I went back to battle ship row and picked up bodies floating in the area. Took them to Marys Point Landing where they were stacked like cord wood, burnt beyond recognition. An officer came up to me and said to get out to the cave behind the Arizona on Ford Island and pick up about 250 Arizona survivors.

I picked up a few more bodies and took them all back to the Liberty Landing. Then picked up the remaining sailors on the deck and returned them to various Destroyers. Later that day I was loaded with

4 torpedos to be taken to Destroyers returning from sea that night. I spent the night onboard the capsized Utah with the load.





Official U.S. Navy photograph, from the collections of the Naval Historical Center

Cassin and Downes in drydock

In Drydock Number One at the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard on Dec. 7, 1941, immediately following the Japanese attack. Both ships had been severely damaged by bomb hits and the resulting fires. In the background, also in Drydock Number One, is USS Pennsylvania (BB-38), which had received relatively light damage in the raid.

On December 7th around 7:30 am I was walking toward Block Arena, quite close to my house, a recreation center for the sailors. I was heading there to get the Altar ready for Chaplin Odium to say Mass. The Arena was used for basketball, boxing and band concerts, then on Sundays for religious services. A couple of women were walking with me when all of a sudden we heard a number of loud "booms." We looked across Hickam Field, an Army/Air Force Base adjacent to Pearl Harbor and saw big clouds of black smoke coming from the hangar area – the field housed B-17's, A-10's and other military aircraft. They normally took off right over our living quarters so we knew our planes well. Then a strange plane coming from

George Millay was a young boy at the time of the attack. His father had been called back to active duty in 1940 and was stationed at Pearl Harbor.

Hickam flew passed – it looked different – not one of ours. Then from a different direction came another single engine plane. It was painted deep green and the rising sun was on its wings. He zoomed off but was immediately followed by 20 plus planes with torpedoes slung beneath. They were heading right toward Ford Island, where the battleships were tied up and were flying between 150 to 200 feet above me in altitude. Then I realized we were under attack – Oh my God, I couldn't believe it. There were in the final run coming into drop their torpedoes. I watched the Oklahoma turn over, the Arizona blow up (famous pictures), the Pennsylvania, in dry dock, exploded.

Our poor Navy was taking a terrible pasting. I ran home to get my BB gun. My father had already dressed and gone to his duty station. Sadly a few neighbors did not. Forty-five minutes or so the second wave of bombers came in. We were a little better prepared. Ten to 12 Japs were shot down by Marine and Navy gunmen. A couple of Japs flew right over our house trailing black smoke then exploded. Our 1939 DeSoto was hit by shrapnel. For days after my brother and I went around digging shrapnel and bullets from the asphalt streets.

My grandmother had just arrived from San Francisco on that Saturday. What a welcome! She and my mother were terrified and worried about my father. As the day wore on we began to realize the gravity of the destruction. Fear was everywhere.

That night and for a week or so we all slept on the ground floor under our mattresses and between overturned couches. Then another tragedy, 4 or 5 of our planes from the USS Lexington offshore were shot down that night trying to land at Ford Island by our anti-aircraft.

During the next few days my mother, grandmother, bud and I helped out at Block Arena. It had been turned into a hospital ward. Our job was to keep the poor sailors comfortable and wait on their needs. This left quite an impression on me for many years.



Official U.S. Navy Photograph, from the collections of the Naval Historical Center.

Ward First Shot veterans

The USS Ward's number three gun and its crew cited for firing the first shot the day of Japan's raid on Hawai'i. Operating as part of the inshore patrol early in the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, this destroyer group spotted a submarine outside Pearl Harbor, opened fire and sank her. Crew members are R.H. Knapp - BM2c - Gun Captain, C.W. Fenton - Sea1c - Pointer, R.B. Nolde - Sea1c - Trainer, A.A. De Demagall - Sea1c - No. 1 Loader, D.W. Gruening - Sea1c - No. 2 Loader, J.A. Paick - Sea1c - No. 3 Loader, H.P. Flanagan - Sea1c - No. 4 Loader, E.J. Bakret - GM3c - Gunners Mate, K.C.J. Lasch - Cox - Sightsetter." This gun is a 4"/50 type, mounted atop the ship's midships deckhouse, starboard side.

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The USS Nevada BB-36 was powered down on Sunday morning 12/7/41, and was anchored behind the USS Arizona in battleship Row, Pearl Harbor. The crew had been on a run the week prior for a "barnacle shake-down," and had just returned to Pearl Harbor. There were suspicions among the crew that two Japanese submarines had followed the Nevada into port. The fact that the Nevada and the other vessels in battleship row were not powered up that Sunday morning is what contributed to the havoc and destruction when a quick response was needed.

Gerald Reifers enlisted in the U.S. Navy in Seattle, Wash. in 1940. He was a seaman assigned to the USS Nevada (BB-36) and joined the ship at Pearl Harbor.

Seaman Reifers was in his bunk at that early hour when the attack began.

Hearing the sounds of the attack, it was not immediately clear what was happening. At first it sounded like the "honey

barge" coming along side (the honey barge collected trash from the ships and caused a rattling sound as it bumped alongside). But as the rattling sounds intensified and continued unabated it was clear something quite different was happening.

Seaman Reifers jumped out of his bunk and headed up the ladder to the boat deck. The first thing he saw, framed by the hatch, was the Red Ball of a Japanese aircraft, the "zero." Chaos was breaking out. The captain was not on board; Lieutenant Commander Francis Thomas was the senior officer. He gave the order to stand out to sea and cast off all lines.

While the ship was powering up – a process that would take 45 minutes - the crew rushed to their duty stations, but without power they were helpless to fight back, as ammunition for the 5" 25 caliber guns had to be conveyed manually. Seaman Reifers and shipmates did everything they could to protect themselves against the incessant firing while rushing to the aide of shipmates who were hit, and manning fire hoses to extinguish the fires raging below deck. Memories of the feelings of confusion, chaos and anger are still clear to Jerry 65 years later.

The ship got underway, making its attempt to exit the harbor – as it sailed past other ships, cheers could be heard from the crews, celebrating the victory the USS Nevada achieved against heavy odds. Then the first torpedo hit in the forward part of the ship. Seaman Reifers now doubted they would clear the harbor – the odds were stacked against them. The ship made a right turn, still proceeding toward open sea, when the second round of torpedoes hit. Hopelessly disabled, the ship received orders to intentionally run aground against a bank at Hospital Point – near the floating dry dock at Waipio Peninsula. This move was made in order to NOT block the harbor for other ships that may have the chance to get out.

Seaman Reifers recalls the emotions and frustration at that time. Everything was in confusion, every one was scared. There was no good communication; training was useless because of the disabilities of the ship from the attacks. The crew did the best they could and managed to return fire on the Japanese aircraft with their manually operated guns.

It was clear the USS Nevada was going to be stranded, but she was the only battleship to get underway during the attack. The crew was abandoning ship with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. They were not able to retrieve any personal possessions due to the fires below deck.

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As assistant to the Damage Control Officer my battle station was at the bottom of the ship in Central Station. As the ship heeled over from seven torpedo hits, we counterflooded the intact starboard compartments. However the compartment was flooding with sea water and oil. Though the deck above was

Archie P. Kelley was an ensign on the USS West Virginia and tells about escaping from a flooded compartment after the attack.

flooded, we managed to escape through an access tube which ran from the ceiling of Central Station to the Conning Tower. I then fought fires in the vicinity of Turret III until finally abandoning ship at the order of the Damage Control Officer at about 1:30 PM. Captain Bennion was killed on the bridge shortly after the first attack and the Executive Officer

had abandoned ship early in the attack. Thus my boss, Cdr. Harper, was in command.

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On Sunday, December 7, 1941, about 7:30 a.m., I joined other sailors at the dock in order to catch a liberty boat to go to the mainland. I planned to attend Mass at the Cathedral in Honolulu. As we waited for the liberty boat, we remarked what an unusual sight it was to see planes flying down the channel so early in the morning. All of a sudden, the planes broke formation and each plane flew toward a different ship. We looked in amazement! One Chief Petty Officer yelled, “Those look like Japanese planes!” The Japs

Ermin Humpal was an aviation machinist's mate first class, assigned to the Naval Air Station on Ford Island.

dropped bombs and launched torpedoes at our ships. There were explosions everywhere! We saw our big battleships on fire. Some were sinking and men were jumping into the water and swimming toward Ford Island where we were. After that, the Japanese planes flew over Ford Island and the pilots and gunners started using their machine guns to hit the seaplanes that were parked on Ford Island. Many were hit and started on fire. (As far as I know, no sailors on the island were wound-

ed). Someone yelled, “Let's get to work!” I ran from the dock to the barracks, took off my white uniform, folded it and put it in my locker and put on my work clothes. (I know I did this but I never have remembered doing it.) I ran to the airplane hangers where ammunition and the machine guns were stored. I joined other sailors in breaking open the lockers. We started to belt .50 caliber bullets for the machine guns. Some of the sailors attached machine-guns to workbenches using the vise as a holder for the guns. They started shooting at the Japanese planes as they flew very low over the Ford Island hanger area during their strafing runs. I can still see the workbench jumping as the guns were fired.

About noon, the shooting died down. We looked in amazement at the damage that was done. There were fires burning everywhere and there was thick black smoke because the oil on the ships caught fire. The sinking ships cut off our water supply. Before we could drink water from the swimming pool, it had to be boiled. For meals we had cold sandwiches. The mess hall was turned into a temporary hospital. The wounded sailors and officers were brought off the damaged ships and many injured sailors were rescued from the water. They were laid on tables in the mess hall. Many of the officers' wives came to help the doctors and pharmacist mates. There were many badly burned patients. That night a blackout of the island was ordered. We didn't sleep much because we feared the Japanese troops would make a landing on Ford Island. Then we might be captured and become prisoners of war. Some of us talked about hiding in the hills. The Japanese planes did not come back. This was just a sneak attack that was devastating to the U.S. Navy. A few days later, all the wounded were taken to the U.S. Naval Hospital that was on the mainland close to Pearl Harbor. We were told the United States declared WAR on Japan. We were put on a wartime status. That meant lots of guard duty and blackouts. All shore leaves were canceled for the time being.

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John Finn was a Navy lieutenant, an aviation chief ordnanceman, stationed at Kaneohe Naval Air Station at the time of the attack. He is the oldest living Medal of Honor recipient and is also the only living Pearl Harbor Day Medal of Honor recipient. He was 97 years of age on July 24, 2006.

His citation for the Medal of Honor states that during the first Japanese attack on Kaneohe, he promptly secured and manned a .50-caliber machine gun mounted on an instruction stand in a completely exposed area of the parking ramp. The area was under heavy enemy machine gun strafing fire.

Although painfully wounded many times, he continued to man the gun and return the enemy's fire vigorously and with telling effect during the enemy strafing and bombing attacks, with complete disregard for his own personal safety. Only by specific orders did he leave his post to seek medical attention. After first-aid, although obviously suffering much pain and moving with great difficulty, he actively supervised the rearming of returning planes. John's Medal of Honor citation

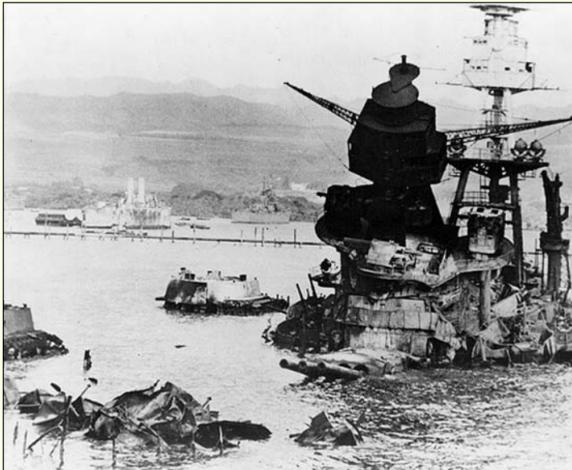
begins, “For extraordinary heroism, distinguished service, and devotion above and beyond the call of duty,” and it concludes, “His extraordinary heroism and conduct in this action were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.”



U.S. Naval Historical Center photograph

Marine Barracks view

View of the parade ground at the Pearl Harbor Marine Barracks, between 0930 and 1130 hrs. on Dec. 7, 1941, with smoke in the background rising from burning ships. Note Marine in foreground. “Springfield” rifle is on the ground beside him. Other armed Marines are also present, awaiting the possible return of Japanese aircraft.



Wreckage of Arizona

Burned out and sunk in Pearl Harbor on Dec. 10, 1941, three days after she was destroyed during the Dec. 7 Japanese raid. Ships in the background are USS Saint Louis (CL-49), in center, and the hulked minelayer Baltimore (CM-1) at left.

Official U.S. Navy photograph, from the collections of the Naval Historical Center